Suits and Wraps

the material's formation, which, in the case of Tyvek, is

appears to emerge, and we can begin

separate corporate spheres, new interfacing problems

by the petrochemical industry by steam cracking ethane or

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examining sub-systems, component parts and constitutive

for an energy efficient building, LEED standards state that

ability to control the passage of moisture and air—are an es-

sential component to reach these goals. Yet Tyvek immedi-

it fails due to micro lesions and capillary effects that can't

in the 1970s, Tyvek was the first synthetic vapour-permeable

barrier, or "homewrap," and currently holds 70% of the

Tyvek does not fit into any of architecture's tradi-

als and objects. In

The Politics of Nature

We can recognize Tyvek as a smooth object even

for its fifteen minutes of fame.

at least three contemporary building codes mandate the

BOCA primarily address structural concerns in construc-

tion, while other codes mandate the installation of a vapour-permeable barrier.

passive water vapor transport, and particulate matter. They condition a house's breath.

The IECC, created in 1989 and

in the interplay of materials, techniques, and processes that are

and consequences on environments and processes that are

It has impacts

and multiplication or offsetting their performances, effects, and risks. By looking at architecture from a materials-first perspective, one can reveal the ways in which works of archi-

Molecular Risk

lightweight building envelope construction. In a typical wall

covered—Tyvek gets its fifteen minutes of fame.

For a suit to completely block off the passage of danger-

Apart from surface features, Tyvek is a material that

it is implicated in multiple ecologies of risk. It has impacts

and produced these objects and brought them to market

and insulation, inside its sheathing. Based on its perfor-

and functional performances from its environment as the smooth object; instead,

and consequences on environments and processes that are

its ability to control the passage of moisture and air—are an es-

situations that they are situated to protect. Some suit materials are

Since Tyvek is thin and light, it has no inherent rigidity and

must be treated to other materials to assume its place

 Tyvek Application: Building weatherization (left). Tyvek used in backdrop (right).

developed in the 1950s and introduced to the market in

the material's formation, which, in the case of Tyvek, is

at least three contemporary building codes mandate the use of a water-resistant barrier, or "homewrap," in wall as-


and humidity inside and out, which in turn produce

The smooth object is produced "by strict laws of causality,

asbestos; it renders a home impermeable and resistant

it is a limited weather barrier, and the literature on the product takes care

in the petrochemical industry to form the Tyvek membrane. Tyvek is manufactured by DuPont in its own

for applications to which it is intended. It is a protective smooth object, and it acts as a barrier to a variety of

10. In other forms of wall construction, a single mate-


16. Ed/1, "Homework is a term that has come to define Tyvek and its竞相. The term itself is indicative of the limitations of the product. It is not a full weather barrier, and the literature on the product takes care

17. Ibid., 2.

18. Ibid., 2.

19. Ibid., 2.

20. Ibid., 2.

21. Ibid., 2.

22. Ibid., 2.

23. Ibid., 2.

24. Ibid., 2.

25. Ibid., 2.

26. Ibid., 2.

27. Ibid., 2.

28. Ibid., 2.

29. Ibid., 2.

30. Ibid., 2.